

Missouri Division of Tourism 2016 Marketing Plan

INTRODUCTION

As the official destination marketing organization charged with promoting Missouri as a leisure travel destination, the Missouri Division of Tourism (MDT) plans and implements a wide variety of marketing initiatives in order to maximize the economic impact of travel to the Show-Me State.

The majority of MDT marketing efforts are focused on the domestic leisure traveler defined as an individual on a trip away from home overnight in paid accommodations, or on a day trip to places 50 miles or more from home. Through extensive research, MDT has determined that women 25-54 who have traveled for leisure by car in the last twelve months represent the core target audience for the marketing campaign. While the campaign appeals broadly to all travelers – and niche campaigns may focus on other specific audience segments – our target audience drives the most travel and represents the best opportunity for expanding incremental travel and overall tourism revenue.

The 2016 Marketing Plan is the strategic roadmap that guides MDT's marketing campaign and has been designed to highlight the benefits that mean the most to the largest potential universe of customers. The goal is to implement a competitively-funded program, and provide the required staffing and marketing resources to achieve success.

The Missouri Division of Tourism's marketing campaign focuses on enhancing the State's desirability as a visitor destination through proven marketing strategies and performance-based activities that demonstrate a positive ROI. Compelling campaign creative, efficient media planning, robust public relations programs and thoughtful research continue to be the cornerstones of MDT efforts to meet this main objective.

ENJOY THE SHOW

A new brand campaign for the state of Missouri was launched in 2013 – *Enjoy the Show*. Developed through consumer research and testing, the *Enjoy the Show* campaign highlights the variety of the tourism product in Missouri and equally supports the five main activity genres which make up that variety: Arts/Culture, Outdoor Recreation, Family Fun, Nightlife/Entertainment and Sports/Gaming. The consumer journey was a guiding principle to lead coordination of the marketing campaign channels and public relations efforts.



The arc of the *Enjoy the Show* campaign in the first three years can be summarized as Launch, Infrastructure and Expansion.

In 2013, the focus was on launching the brand and maximizing campaign awareness and impact, reinforcing foundational brand elements across paid, earned and owned channels both within and out-of-state.

In 2014, the campaign followed the recommendations of marketing and media effectiveness research and utilized many of the same foundational campaign elements with supplemental creative introduced to support the campaign. At the same time, media markets and target audiences were re-examined and enhancements were made. Campaign attribution and reporting was increased and additional research efforts were made to better understand the target audience.

Entering its third year, the focus was on campaign expansion. In 2015, the campaign moved into new markets and took advantage of new media opportunities. The creative campaign began earlier and ran later in the year, with new campaign elements devoted to selling Missouri as a Fall travel destination.

NEW CREATIVE FOR 2016

After three years, the *Enjoy the Show* campaign is clearly a success, but like any marketing, campaigns must evolve to stay resonant with the target audience. Marketing research revealed *Enjoy the Show* needed a refresh and as a result 2016 introduces a new look for the campaign.

Enjoy the Show remains the tagline and the message of variety innate in the five activity buckets and stays at the center of the campaign; however, the creative focuses on encouraging travelers to find *their* perfect Missouri vacation within all the state has to offer. To drive this message home, the Missouri Division of Tourism identified six groups of real travelers from within some of our key travel markets. Representing the diversity of travelers and travel groups, each was given a three-day driving trip through Missouri and provided with cameras to document their entire adventure. The footage each group captured has become the cornerstone of the television, print, outdoor and online campaign and illustrate that whatever type of vacation you seek, you can find your own show in Missouri.

MARKETING OBJECTIVES FOR 2016

Based upon the Missouri Division of Tourism's Strategic Plan, the marketing objectives for 2016 are designed to position Missouri to effectively compete for travel and tourism market share resulting in increased travel to the state and higher tourism revenue.

A strong paid media mix with multiple touch points to reach the consumer is vital to the success of Missouri tourism; however, it is the overlay and interaction of this paid channel with the earned and owned channels that maximize the state's ability to reach consumers at all phases of the consumer journey. Each of these three main channels, and the myriad of tactics within them, offer unique and specific ways to communicate with a potential traveler within their individual consumer journey.

In support of maximizing the economic impact of travel in the Show-Me State, the 2016 marketing objectives are:

Objective 1: Enhance the State's desirability as a visitor destination through a performance-based media plan that demonstrates a clear and positive ROI

Objective 2: Integrate communication messages across paid, earned and owned channels

Objective 3: Increase traffic to Missouri Welcome Centers

Objective 4: Refine offerings of cooperative marketing to maximize impact and identify new partnership opportunities

Objective 5: Increase awareness in and travel by the domestic group travel market

Objective 6: Increase awareness in and travel from key international markets

Objective 7: Expand awareness of Missouri Film Office services among the amateur and professional film, television and digital media industry

OBJECTIVE 1: Enhance the State's desirability as a visitor destination through a performance-based media plan that demonstrates a clear and positive ROI

Continue to produce strong return on investment of MDT resources as measured by the 2016 Marketing & Media Effectiveness Study, conducted by Strategic Marketing and Research, Inc., (SMARI) in terms of incremental visitation, incremental expenditures and overall ROI, as well as measures of brand awareness, perception and intent to travel that influence travel to Missouri. Additionally, focus marketing efforts towards the goal of meeting or exceeding U.S. Travel Association's national leisure travel forecast in 2016 in terms of statewide visitation and expenditures as measured by the 2016 Economic Impact of Tourism Report by Tourism Economics.

Tactics

- Maintain the general market share-of-voice
Continue to monitor advertising spend by medium in each of the key markets, in order to achieve and maintain a top three share-of-voice position for the state among its competitors.

- Place integrated and targeted media in our identified markets

The advertising plan is designed to keep Missouri top-of-mind as a destination in priority and base markets and to drive our target audience to VisitMO.com for more information.

SMARI research results have shown us that advertising in multiple media is critical to achieving maximum effectiveness. A blend of the following advertising elements will be used to promote Missouri Tourism:

- Television
- Print
- Online Advertising (desktop, mobile and tablet)
- Search Engine Marketing
- Social Media Advertising
- Outdoor Advertising

The target audience for advertising is women 25-54 who have taken a leisure trip by car in the last twelve months. Research indicates that this audience represents the primary travel decision maker for their household, and this audience can be effectively targeted through the media buy.

MDT will ensure an advertising presence in **Priority markets**: Chicago, Louisville, and Memphis, as well as **Base markets**: Cedar Rapids-Waterloo & Dubuque; Champaign & Springfield-Decatur; Des Moines; Evansville; Jonesboro; Oklahoma City; Omaha; Paducah-Cape Girardeau-Harrisburg- Mt. Vernon; Peoria-Bloomington; Quad Cities (Davenport-Rock Island-Moline); Sioux City; Terre Haute; Topeka and Tulsa.

We also continue to monitor **Spill markets**, which are markets that receive secondary media by virtue of regional buys, but they don't receive spot television. Those markets are: Bowling Green, KY; Chattanooga, TN; Columbia/Jefferson City, MO; Dallas, TX; Fort Wayne, IN; Ft. Smith, AR; Jackson, TN; Joplin, MO; Kansas City, MO; Knoxville, TN; Lafayette, IN; Lima, OH; Lincoln, NE; Hastings, NE; Little Rock, AR; North Platte, AR; Ottumwa, IA; Kirksville, MO; Quincy, IL; Rockford, IL; South Bend, IN; Springfield, MO; St. Joseph, MO; St. Louis, MO; Toledo, OH; Tri Cities (Kingsport-Johnson City-Bristol); Wichita, KS; Youngstown, OH; Zanesville, OH.

- Continue strong presence in 2015 Expansion Markets

MDT will also continue to advertise with a strong media mix in **Expansion markets** added in 2015: Cincinnati, Cleveland, Columbus, Dayton, Nashville, Lexington and Indianapolis.

- Evaluate shoulder season marketing to maximize media ROI

MDT runs advertising during peak travel planning times, with the majority of activity running in the spring and summer. In 2015, increased budget allowed advertising to begin in March with television, digital and print advertising and continue later in the year with a Fall-focused advertising campaign August through October.

It is important to recognize that the increased demand for television advertising in 2016 as a result of presidential primaries and the general election may necessitate adjustments in the seasonality of advertising in order to continue to place media that projects to drive the highest

ROI.

- Expand Travel Guide distribution

The Missouri Travel Guide is one of the key marketing pieces created by MDT each year. In order to maximize the distribution of the guide, MDT will continue to use lead generation programs as well as expand into a polybag program to deliver the guide directly to consumers in Chicago, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Columbus, Indianapolis, Lexington, Louisville and Nashville.

Objective 2: Integrate communication messages across paid, earned and owned channels

Integrate social media, email and public relations content calendars to take advantage of opportunities both to align and to deliver complementary marketing messages to our target audience through each unique media.

Tactics

- Integrate editorial calendars to reflect a centralized publishing strategy

Editorial and publishing calendars representing email, social, paid social, website, blog and public relations content will be further integrated and optimized in order to facilitate long-term planning and short-term responsiveness to events and news stories. This centralized editorial calendar will also assist in the communication of keyword opportunities back and forth between content creators and SEO and SEM program administrators.

- Expand social content and social media advertising integration

The importance of social media is constantly increasing, especially as an extension of efforts aimed at promoting the loyalty and advocacy of Missouri travelers. Placing paid media creative within social platforms for the purpose of growing the state's social communities and increasing engagement with those communities is a necessary effort to support greater word-of-mouth and share-of-voice.

- Expand Search Engine Marketing strategies to include seasonal keywords in addition to evergreen keyword strategies

Search Engine Marketing (SEM) is the process of purchasing popular and/or relevant keywords in search engines so that a search display ad appears in context of the rest of the organic search results. SEM is built on understanding what keywords a consumer naturally thinks to use when looking for content and balancing that with what keywords and page structures search engines are technically looking for in order to display results. The combination of the two factors leads to the search results which then need to utilize page names, links and copy to reinforce in the mind of the consumer that the information is relevant, valuable and trustworthy in order to generate a click. It is best summed up as the intent of the consumer, the requirements of the search engine and the projected credibility and validity of the search results to that original consumer intent.

Focusing SEM strategy in 2016 requires aligning keyword strategy with content calendars to match the best keywords to the most relevant content. The associated keywords can then be

developed with both a seasonal and an evergreen approach to drive traffic to VisitMO when most relevant to certain activities while still ensuring a steady amount of traffic all year long.

- Expand Email & Customer Relationship Management Initiatives

MDT will continue the successful Email and CRM program that delivers targeted email messages to travelers who have requested information. In 2016, MDT will continue to build the email database by continuing lead generation programs; expanding promotion on email registration in social media; expanding grass roots email sign-up at events including Consumer Trade Shows and the Missouri State Fair; and enhancing methods of email registration at Missouri Welcome Centers.

- Evaluate ways to enhance VisitMO.com

VisitMO.com is the primary online destination of the Enjoy the Show marketing campaign. As the digital landscape continues to evolve, it necessitates regular review of VisitMO from a technical, structural and content point of view. In 2016, MDT will review the performance of VisitMO.com to determine whether it can be enhanced to better support the dreaming and planning phases of the consumer journey. This review will take into consideration desktop and mobile accessibility and usability, and the best ways to either incorporate or promote campaign creative, blog content and social media activity.

Additionally, VisitMO must continue to enhance analytics to better understand how the site performs relative to traffic source and how the activity on the website can better inform us about our travelers to the state.

- Develop an online experience to promote the 2016 Enjoy the Show campaign

As discussed in the introduction, 2016 will introduce a new creative campaign. One of the ways to effectively drive campaign engagement will be through the creation of an online experience that delivers expanded information on our six groups' trips and furthers engagement with the attractions and destinations they visited.

OBJECTIVE 3: Increase traffic to Missouri Welcome Centers

MDT operates nine Official Welcome Centers – seven at entry points of the state and two along a major interstate crossing the state from St. Louis to Joplin – which represents a key component of Missouri's marketing infrastructure. (In addition, there are eight Affiliate Centers statewide).

In FY15, Missouri completed its first Welcome Center study in five years to update intelligence on the centers and their visitors. The conclusions were not surprising, but instead served as confirmation that travelers using Welcome Centers are aging (76 percent of the visitors are 55 or older) and that the centers must evolve to capture the attention of the coming generations.

Tactics

- Continue to provide the personal touch

Knowledgeable, helpful and friendly Welcome Center staff are MDT's secret weapon. Despite the fact that the majority of travelers say they stopped to use the restrooms or

stretch their legs, the human contact provided by staff is what makes the difference. Welcome center staff will continue to provide directions, give suggestions for things to see and do, where to eat and where to stay or just have a conversation with travelers and make a positive impression on their day.

- Explore opportunities to enhance the visitor experience

Survey respondents are looking for amenities, such as food and beverages, places to sit and relax while looking over collateral materials, charging devices or using free Wi-Fi. As the majority of the Welcome Centers are owned and operated by Missouri Department of Transportation, MDT will engage in ongoing discussions on these topics.

- Identify new ways to promote Welcome Centers during peak travel times

Welcome Centers take on increased importance during peak drive travel times: Memorial Day Weekend, the Fourth of July, Labor Day Weekend and the Thanksgiving holiday. The US Travel Association established National Tourism Week which provides additional opportunities to promote awareness of the Welcome Centers and offer enhanced amenities.

- Increase lead generation at Welcome Centers throughout the year

Knowing that Welcome Center visitors have increased tourism expenditures means those travelers are valuable leads for continued communication. Focusing efforts on connecting with Welcome Center visitors through social media, email and Travel Guide distribution ensures they can continue to be reached and marketed to for years to come.

Objective 4: Refine offerings of cooperative marketing to maximize impact and identify new partnership opportunities

Cooperative marketing and partnership opportunities are a key way to extend the marketing of not only the state, but also the DMOs that participate in the program. In addition to financial impact, cooperative marketing also may result in better placements, larger placements and more impactful messaging through a shared travel message.

Tactics

- Continue to fine-tune the Promote Missouri Fund

One of the most significant commitments to expanding strategic cooperative marketing and partnership in 2016 is tied to updates of MDT's cooperative marketing program - the Promote Missouri Fund (PMF). The Marketing Matching Grant (MMG) is designed to provide marketing matching funds to DMOs for approved leisure travel marketing; Collective Marketing Initiatives (CMI) are select media opportunities, negotiated by MDT with media partners and offered to DMOs and private tourism businesses; and the Marketing Platform Development (MPD) opportunity is a one-time grant of matching funds emerging DMOs to support development of marketing collateral or research, which has multi-year benefit to the DMO. Full details of the PMF are included in the Promote Missouri Fund Guidelines.

Streamlining administrative tasks related to the program and better defining the CMI offerings to align with the greatest interest to partners will continue to grow the impact of cooperative marketing in the state.

- Pursue State Agency Partnerships

Another focus of partnership in 2016 will be identifying new cooperative marketing opportunities between state agencies. Through regular communication with these agencies, MDT hopes to identify marketing, tradeshow and public relations opportunities to pool resources and offer more unified messages to the consumer.

MDT will continue to work with Missouri State Parks, The Missouri Department of Conservation, the Missouri Department of Natural Resources, advocacy groups, and the private sector to stay current with the goals and missions of these organizations, and to effectively coordinate efforts to promote the state's outdoor assets.

The Missouri Division of Tourism will also partner with the Missouri Wine & Grape Board on content creation that can be distributed across both organizations social, owned and earned communication channels.

- Maximize participation in regional and national cooperative marketing opportunities

Just as MDT offers its own cooperative marketing program within the state, the Division will continue to look for ways that it can become of larger cooperative opportunities itself. Missouri joined Travel South in 2015 and that relationship has continued to provide a growing number of cooperative marketing, public relations and research opportunities both domestically and internationally.

OBJECTIVE 5: Increase awareness in and travel by the domestic group travel market

Improve existing and develop new relationships with professional travel professionals in order to keep Missouri top of mind when developing travel product.

Tactics

- Pursue appropriate group travel marketing opportunities

The packaged travel market includes traditional group tours and affinity market trips such as student, reunion, bank travel clubs, religious travel groups and military groups. While the group market comprises a small percentage of visitations to the state, it remains a viable opportunity for the Division. Traditionally, MDT has targeted this segment through participation in shows that allowed interaction with professional travel planners, including group tour operators, receptives, group leaders and bank travel clubs. MDT's participation in these shows has particularly benefitted many of the state's smaller destinations that could not afford to attend on their budgets. MDT collects the leads from these planners and distributes them to its statewide constituents.

In 2016, MDT will continue to look for opportunities for more proactive outreach and follow up on existing relationships that have been developed through the years. MDT's contracted vendor will continue to attend shows and maintain state relationships with travel trade professionals.

MDT's partnership in Travel South USA has already resulted in the selection of Branson as the host city for the 2017 TSUSA Domestic Showcase; in addition, through this new participation in Travel South additional research in this market has become available and those findings will assist in helping to grow this market.

OBJECTIVE 6: Increase awareness in and travel from key international markets

While international travel to Missouri represents a small percentage of all tourism to the state, research reveals international travelers stay longer and spend more on average than domestic travelers and international travel does represent a growth opportunity. When targeting international marketing opportunities, MDT will focus on the most cost effective ways to target audiences with the highest probability to travel with special focus on the frequent traveler who has been to the United States multiple times and is looking for the authentic American experience.

Tactics

- Utilize cooperative marketing programs to extend international marketing budget

MDT will continue partnerships with Brand USA (BUSA), Mississippi River Country (MRC) and Travel South USA (TSUSA) that will promote Missouri to international travelers.

As the nation's DMO, BUSA's mission is to "encourage increased international visitation to the United States and to grow America's share of the global travel market." BUSA does this by providing cooperative marketing opportunities for states and DMOs. With a budget of approximately \$150 million, BUSA is getting the word out around the world that America is open for visiting.

MRC, a consortium of the 10 states along the Mississippi River, focuses on the Japanese market and promotes the river, the Great River Road and the opportunities along this corridor for travelers to have a real American experience.

With TSUSA, Missouri has opportunities to partner regionally and increase exposure to international travelers. TSUSA offers smaller marketplaces, with planners who are pre-qualified because of their interest in this region of the U.S.

- Attend internationally-focused travel trade shows and conferences
Over the past few years, MDT's participation in IPW, World Travel Market, TSUSA International Showcase and BUSA events have become cornerstones in the state's international marketing and international travel trade promotion. Continued participation in these events in 2016 represents another opportunity for extending international marketing dollars and identifying potential travelers from around the world who are interested in visiting the state.

OBJECTIVE 7: Expand awareness of Missouri Film Office services among the amateur and professional film, television and digital media industry

In 2016, the Missouri Film Office will look to leverage the success of projects produced in

Missouri to attract new production, and target members of the entertainment industry at high profile events for maximum impact of marketing efforts. Additionally, the office will look for ways to expand outreach into the entertainment industry and expand the industry's knowledge of and engagement with the Film Office.

Tactics

- Grow Missouri Stories Scriptwriting Fellowship awareness and increase number of applications
In just two years, the Missouri Stories Scriptwriting Fellowship has proven itself as a tremendous tool for not only supporting the filmmaking community and identifying new Missouri-set stories, but also for engaging the established film community through judging the competition and serving as mentors for the winners. In 2016, the fellowship looks to build on momentum and utilize target media and public relations efforts to expand awareness of the competition, the application process and the Missouri Film Office.
- Promote Missouri Film Office at Film Festivals
Missouri is host to 15 annual film festivals, many of which have achieved international recognition including True / False Film Fest, Kansas City Filmfest, Citizen Jane Film Festival and St. Louis International Film Fest. Continuing a commitment to partner on the promotion of these festivals and outreach to film industry in attendance is a primary tactic for expanding the awareness of the Missouri Film Office.
- Expand participation in AFCI Locations Show
The AFCI Locations Show in Los Angeles is the premier event for promoting locations and services related to entertainment industry production. Leveraging Missouri's presence at the show will increase awareness of the benefits and advantages of filming in Missouri. The conference also serves as a platform for reaching out to native Missouri residents living and working in Los Angeles who can speak first-hand about the opportunities in the Show-Me State.
- Develop new creative assets to promote the Missouri Film Office that take advantage of the *Enjoy the Show* campaign
The *Enjoy the Show* brand provides a template for refreshing the look and feel of the Missouri Film Office marketing materials in both consumer and business facing collateral. Establishing consistency in marketing assets will allow the Division of Tourism and the Film Office to mutually benefit from the awareness driven through both campaigns.